



The Closed-Loop Scoop

Washington State Department of Ecology, Solid Waste & Financial Assistance Program

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Spokane Regional Solid Waste Wins RBRC Award

Inland Empire metropolis recharges the nation

The Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation (RBRC) "Community Recycling Leadership Award" recognizes RBRC community program participants for their outstanding efforts in rechargeable battery recycling. Each year, two community programs receive Regional Leadership Awards, while the National Leadership Award goes to one very special community. And this year, that community is greater Spokane.

Gary Schimmels, of the Spokane Regional Solid Waste Liaison Board and a City of Spokane Valley Council Member, accepted the RBRC National Community Recycling Leadership Award on November 15, 2004. The presentation took place at the "Washington Recycles Day" luncheon at the WSU/Spokane County Extension Education Center. The Spokane Regional Solid Waste System (SRSWS) has been part of the RBRC community recycling program since February 2003 and since then has collected over 25,000 pounds of rechargeable batteries.

"The Spokane Solid Waste System is proud of its accomplishment as a leader in community recycling and is honored to work with RBRC to reach our environmental goals," said Dennis Hein, Director of the SRSWS. "Our dedication to environmental education is greatly enhanced by relationships such as these."

The SRSWS program received special recognition for its efforts to educate community members about the importance, and ease, of recycling rechargeable batteries. Examples of initiatives include highlighting the RBRC program on their community Web site (<http://www.spokanesolidwaste.org/hhw.htm>) and educating residents about the different types of rechargeable batteries that can be recycled.

The SRSWS Web site also directs residents to drop off sites and gives a link to the RBRC site locator (<http://www.rbrc.org/consumer/uslocate.html>). RBRC's Battery Lesson Plan appears in the SRSWS community recycling guide, and RBRC's public service announcement, thanks to SRSWS, has reached the local audience.

Community recycling programs in Sandy Springs, Georgia, and Olmstead, Minnesota, earned RBRC's Regional Community Recycling Leadership Awards.

In announcing these awards, the RBRC noted that the Sandy Springs/North Fulton Keep America Beautiful affiliate has rapidly increased their collection rate as well as their education and public outreach to the Sandy Springs community. Olmstead County, Minnesota, enrolled in the RBRC program in 1996. The Olmstead County Public Works program has a permanent recycling facility that operates year-round and serves 8,000 customers each year. Special initiatives include the collection of more than 3,000 pounds of rechargeable batteries and annual mobile (bookmobile style) hazardous waste collections in rural areas throughout Olmstead.

RBRC Battery Recycling Seals on portable rechargeable batteries



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Clark County Agencies Win National Award for Innovation



"... they learned about the problems associated with handling controlled substances."

In December, Clark County Solid Waste and the Clark County Sheriff's Department had the honor to receive the Innovation Program Award from The North America Hazardous Materials Management Association (NAHMMA). At its annual conference, NAHMMA presented the award to Clark County in recognition of its pilot program, Controlled Substance Collection.

Proper drug disposal is an emerging environmental issue. Through washing, bathing, or excretion, all medications applied or ingested may find their way into sewage systems and from there to the environment. Communities across the country are concerned over health and environmental impacts that unwanted medications would have if they were left at the curb for disposal as solid waste or, what's worse, if they were flushed into sewers. The specific risks posed to humans by long-term consumption of minute quantities of medications in drinking water and the risks to the environment by continual exposure are unknown.

When county staff approached pharmacies about unwanted medications, they learned about the problems associated with

Helping the environment say "No!" to drugs

handling controlled substances. A "controlled substance" is a drug or other substance, or immediate precursor, included in Chapter 13, Title 21 of U.S. Code as enforced by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Pharmacies and other hazardous waste disposal vendors cannot take controlled substances for disposal from end-users, patients, or families of patients.

The county, with the support of the Washington State Pharmacy Board, contacted the DEA and received authorization to start a pilot collection program for controlled substances at the Clark County Sheriff's West Precinct. The pilot program enables the Sheriff's office to measure quantities of substances collected and cost of operations, and to control and track substances that are collected, all of which is incinerated. The program collects controlled substances from county residents only.

For more information about the Controlled Substance Collection program, contact Clark County Solid Waste at 360-397-6118, extension 4352.

Calendar of Events

May 1-4, 2005, Washington State Recycling Association 25th Annual Recycling Conference and Trade Show will take place in Yakima. For details, contact the Washington State Recycling Association at 206-244-0311 or visit their Web site at <http://www.wsra.net/>.

Two events presented by the Oregon Environmental Council:

March 15, 2005: Sustainability: Oregon's Leading Brand? Svend Auken, 4:00 to 6:00 p.m., Oregon Convention Center, Portland

May 11, 2005: "Green" Marketing Moves Into the Mainstream. Theresa Marquez and Mark Currie, 7:00 to 9:00 a.m., Multnomah Athletic Club, Portland. For information about these events, call 503-222-1963 or visit their Web site at <http://www.oregoncouncil.org/Events/0405%20BusinessForum.htm>.

February 11, 2005, Climate Change, Energy, and the Future of Washington State, a one-day conference at The Evergreen State College in Olympia. To learn more, call the Graduate Program in Environmental Studies at 360-867-6707, or visit the Web site at <http://www.evergreen.edu/events/climatechange/>.

March 2-3, 2005, Sustainability in the Inland Northwest, a two-day conference at the Grove Hotel in Boise, Idaho. To learn more, call 877-385-9510, or visit the conference Web site at <http://www.sustainableidaho.org/>.

Winter/Spring 2005, Illahee Earth Matters Lecture Series: 2/16, Stewart Brand; 3/9, Lucy Lippard; 3/30, Jane Holtz Kay; 4/19, Bill McKibben; 5/18, Gary Snyder. To learn more, call 503-222-2719 or visit the Web site at <http://www.illahee.org/lectures.html>.

Reuse-A-Shoe Athletic Shoe Recycling Comes to Kitsap

Program puts new bounce in recycling and community

Kitsap County Public Works and Leadership Kitsap, a local volunteer organization, are teaming up with Nike and the National Recycling Coalition to bring the innovative "Reuse-A-Shoe" program to Kitsap County. Over twenty businesses located throughout the county are collecting athletic shoes of all brands, which will be sent back to Nike, ground up, and remanufactured into basketball and tennis courts, athletic fields, running tracks, and/or playground surfaces. "Our goal," says Melissa Tippetts of Leadership Kitsap, "is to collect at least 5,000 pairs of old shoes for Nike to process then install a Nike Grind play surface in a Kitsap County park."

"The Nike 'producer take-back' program has been in place for 12 years and is an example of how manufacturers are stepping up to the plate to take responsibility for the waste that results when products come to the end of their intended life," says Terri Washburn of Kitsap County Public Works. "Cities and counties across the nation are supporting Nike's effort to close the recycling loop. It takes 3,000 pairs of athletic shoes to make a surface for a basketball court and 100,000 pairs for an outdoor track."

"The support for this project by the local business community has been overwhelming," reports Washburn. "Within days of mailing participation letters to fitness centers, gyms, retailers, and sports centers, calls started coming in to set up collection bins. In addition, local charitable organizations are

able to divert hundreds of unusable shoes from the landfill thereby reducing their disposal costs through this project."

Residents can bring their old, tired, used-up athletic shoes to any of the public collection points starting January 24. Schools will collect shoes from their students' families beginning in March. All brands of athletic shoes are accepted. Shoes with cleats, spikes, or blinking lights cannot be accepted. Volunteers will remove metal parts, such as eyelets, untie shoelaces, and remove shoes from plastic bags. The project will culminate under the big top in the Kitsap Mall parking lot on April 22 through 24, with local volunteers on hand to collect shoes and prepare them for shipment.

Leadership Kitsap, established in 1995, is a nonprofit volunteer organization that educates individuals on civic leadership, volunteerism, community partnerships, and diversity to promote community involvements and improvements in Kitsap County. To learn more about Leadership Kitsap, visit their Web site at www.leadershipkitsap.org.

For a complete list of drop-off sites and additional information, visit the Reuse-A-Shoe Web site developed by and hosted by DONOBi at www.kitsapreuseashoe.org. Information about Nike Grind and the Nike program, visit www.nikereuseashoe.com.

Environmental Health Lecture Series

Herbicides and Human Health: Are Frogs Our Canaries in the Coal Mine? – February 8, 2005, 7to 8:30 p.m.

New field and laboratory studies are showing that very low levels of the herbicide atrazine are having profound effects on the sexual development of frogs. What does this mean for humans, given that atrazine is the most widely used herbicide in the US and is found not only in our air and food, but in our groundwater as well? How might it affect both our reproductive and neurological systems? **Tyrone Hayes, PhD**, Professor of Developmental Endocrinology at U.C. Berkeley, will discuss his groundbreaking work on atrazine's effects on frogs and the implications for human health.

Air Pollution and Children: Not Breathing Easy – March 16, 2005, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Increasingly, children are breathing a "chemical soup" with effects on a variety of developing systems. **Ruth A. Etzel, MD, PhD**, adjunct professor at George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services, will discuss mounting evidence showing the need for further action to prevent children's exposure to indoor and outdoor air pollution.

All events will be held at the Seattle Art Museum, 100 University Street, downtown Seattle, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m., with a chance to meet the speaker at a reception immediately following.

For more information or reservations, see <http://iceh.org/CHE-NWlectures.html> or call 360-331-7904.

Series sponsored by Seattle Biotech Legacy Foundation and organized by Institute for Children's Environmental Health.

RBRC Rolls Out Cell Phone Recycling Program

Call2Recycle™ now available through communities and public agencies nationwide



"... the RBRC program is growing and expanding."

Last October, the Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation (RBRC), a nonprofit public service organization dedicated to recycling rechargeable batteries and cell phones, announced the rollout of *Call2Recycle™*, a nationwide cell phone recycling program now available to communities and public agencies nationwide.

By 2005, roughly 200 million cell phones will be in use in the United States, and approximately 130 million phones will be retired each year, according to INFORM. A survey conducted by NOP World for RBRC revealed that more than 70% of respondents are unaware that cell phones are recyclable, though nearly 90% indicated they would recycle cell phones if provided with convenient drop-off points.

Call2Recycle™ is available to all communities and public agencies including federal, state, and local governmental agencies, public hospitals, police and fire departments, and military institutions to encourage people to drop off their old cell phones. In addition to benefiting the environment, a portion of the proceeds received from the resale of cell phones will benefit charitable organizations, such as Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

"Expanding our recycling efforts to the collection of used cell phones through communities and public agencies is the next step in helping to recycle as many rechargeable batteries and cell phones as possible," said Ralph Millard, Executive Vice President, RBRC. "While so many public programs, including those involving recycling, are getting either cut or reduced significantly, the RBRC program is growing and expanding."

call2recycle™

Highlights of the *Call2Recycle* program include the following:

- Cell phones will be collected in newly designed all-in-one cell phone and battery collection boxes.
- Old phones will either be recycled into components and base materials for other uses, or refurbished and resold.
- A portion of the proceeds will be donated to charity.
- The rechargeable batteries in the phones will be recycled through RBRC's existing battery recycling channels.
- www.call2recycle.org: a Web site and toll free help line, 1-877-2-RECYCLE, dedicated to providing program information and drop-off locations. Community locations will be listed on Web site and help line, public agencies will not.
- No cost to participate for communities and public agencies

Since 1994, RBRC has collected over 22 million pounds of rechargeable batteries—those found in a growing list of portable electronics products, including cellular and cordless phones, two-way radios, camcorders, laptop computers, and cordless power tools. A number of retail chains, such as Radio Shack, that have been collecting rechargeable batteries from the public are now also participating in RBRC's *Call2Recycle™* program. So are many locally owned electronics and hardware retailers. Consumers can find the nearest participating drop-off location by calling 1-877-2-RECYCLE or 1-800-8-BATTERY, or by going online at www.call2recycle.org or www.rbrc.org.

EPA Inducts King County Into WasteWise Hall of Fame

Local government breaks into the majors

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has distinguished King County's outstanding recycling collection, waste prevention, and "buying recycled" practices by making King County the first government agency inductee into the national WasteWise Hall of Fame.

"King County works hard to improve efficiency, to save money, and to conserve natural resources by preventing waste and reusing materials, and the WasteWise program has helped us become a national leader with these efforts," said King County Executive Ron Sims. "This is quite an honor, since more than 1,500 businesses and institutions are WasteWise partners nationwide."

The EPA created the Hall of Fame for its WasteWise program last year to honor WasteWise members that have repeatedly won top awards in the program. Last year, Virco Manufacturing, Kodak, and PSEG (a New Jersey-based utility company) were the first inductees into the Hall of Fame. This year, General Motors and King County were inducted (in Washington, D.C., on October 15). King County is the first and only government agency in the WasteWise Hall of Fame.

On November 8, Sims recognized King County employees who helped win the WasteWise Hall of Fame award and honored four private sector and nonprofit partners who have helped King County meet its environmental goals. The partners are Wright Runstad, Sea-Dru-Nar, Total Reclaim, and the RE Store.

Being a WasteWise partner involves setting goals and evaluating internal recycling collection, waste prevention, and "buying recycled" practices. King County's Solid Waste Division administers the program. The County's 2003 achievements cited in the award application include thirty-eight million pounds of materials collected internally for recycling, \$5.1 million worth of recycled paper and other environmentally preferable products purchased, and \$3 million in savings from reuse projects.

More information about the King County WasteWise program and its accomplishments is available at <http://www.metrokc.gov/dnrp/swd/about/waste-wise>. Learn about the EPA's 2004 WasteWise awards at <http://www.epa.gov/wastewise/about/winners.htm>.

Annual Solid Waste Status Report

Solid Waste in Washington State - Thirteenth Annual Status Report (Publication #04-07-018) will be available in mid-February. It will contain recycling/diversion, moderate risk waste and disposal information for 2003, litter statistics, and various "partnering for the environment" activities during the past year. Please check the Solid Waste & Financial Assistance Program Web site "What's New" at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/index.html> in the next few weeks to link to the on-line copy. Much of the recycling/diversion and disposal data contained in the report is already available at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/solidwastedata/>.

If you would like to reserve a printed copy of the annual status report, please send your name and mailing address to Helen Fox, SWFAP, Dept. of Ecology, P.O. Box 47600, Olympia, WA 98504-7600, or by e-mail to HFOX461@ECY.WA.GOV.

Terry Husseman Sustainable Schools Awards Program Reminder!

Ecology intends to reward schools that embrace sustainability through the Terry Husseman Sustainable Schools Awards Program.

The application package is available on the web at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/terryhusseman.html>, or by contacting Michelle Payne at mdav461@ecy.wa.gov or 360-407-6129. The applications are due February 25, 2005. The judging and selection will happen in March, notice of the chosen applicants will occur in April, and an award ceremony will be held in the State Capitol Rotunda on May 13, 2005. Please encourage your local school to participate in this competitive, yet lucrative award program!

Recycling Rate Climbs for Officially Defined Recyclables

More inclusive "diversion rate" also climbs

Recycling by businesses and residents in Washington rose to 38 percent in 2003, up from 35 percent the year before, according to numbers compiled by Department of Ecology's Solid Waste and Financial Assistance Program (Ecology). Gains were made primarily in metals, paper, and yard-waste recycling. Ecology officials say this is due to good recycling practices, better resale markets for the materials, and more yard-waste collection programs.

The official recycling rate for municipal solid waste (MSW) is based on a required definition set forth in state law. It includes most recycling of glass, plastic, paper, metals, and organics along with some recycling of tires and used oil. To determine a recycling rate that is consistent and comparable to past years, Ecology has measured a very specific part of the solid waste stream since 1986. It is roughly the part of the waste stream defined as MSW by the Environmental Protection Agency. A 1989 state law established a statewide recycling goal of 50 percent.

Other types of material recovery are easing the pressure on landfills, even though they are not part of officially counted recycling rate. These materials include concrete and asphalt, other construction and demolition debris, items burned for energy recovery,

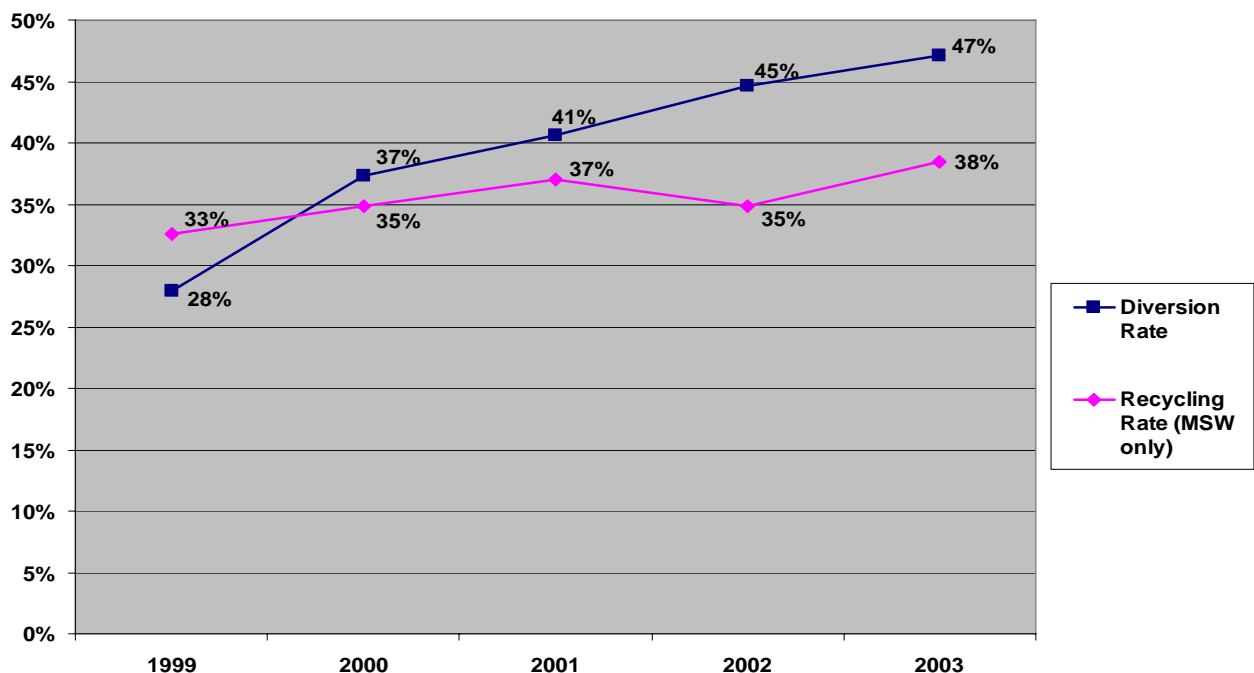
and some reused items. Coupled with the recycled items, the statewide rate for diverted materials is 47 percent in 2003, up from 45 percent in 2002.

"To have almost half of the waste generated in Washington diverted away from landfills is a great success story," said Cullen Stephenson, who manages Ecology's solid waste program. "It's evidence of responsible waste management." He noted, however, that while recycling has increased, the total amount of waste generated has continued to climb. Currently, Washington residents produce an average of 7 pounds of MSW per person each day, compared to 6.5 pounds a day in 2002.

Waste composition studies in Washington, Oregon, and California show that a large amount of landfill waste is food scraps and paper. Food waste makes up more than 15 percent of household garbage and paper makes up more than 20 percent of household garbage.

For more information about Washington's recycling and diversion data, please visit our solid waste data page at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/solidwastedata/>. For questions about Washington's recycling and diversion measurement, please contact Gretchen Newman, Solid Waste Data Specialist, at 360-407-6097.

Washington State Recycling & Diversion Rate - 1999 to 2003



From Waste-to-Worth: Why? Part 3

Jay Shepard, Sustainability Strategist

was that by doing this, the standard of living would rise for all. It became morally correct to desire and envy others' possessions because it would improve the individual's physical and moral condition, thereby improving the standard of living for all.

Children of the 1910s and 1920s learned that envy and longings should be indulged, not repressed. Advertisers organized campaigns around this theme. Rather than selling things, marketers began selling dreams, or pathways to realize what one longed for. This new consumption society provided the means to meet social needs and esteem needs.

The social needs of belonging, affection, and love were, and still are, satiated by consumerism. But when the experience is no longer satisfying, the consumer needs to seek out something new. This leads us into competition, greed, and insatiable desire.

Esteem needs are truly at the core here; satisfying this need has evolved into the belief that if one had the right car, clothing, and possessions, one could transform oneself or be "made over" into someone else; someone who we are not.

The fifth level of need, self-actualization, may never be fulfilled. As a society we have been duped into thinking that image, created by the things we use and wear, is what should be valued most heavily.

You may be wondering where I am going with this. You may be thinking, as I have for years, that it is impossible to compete with Madison Avenue advertising budgets and a television broadcasting system that relies on revenue from advertising for its profits. Consumerism is so deceptively seductive and so basic to the economy that we wonder how it could possibly change.

We'll explore that, and what we can do about it, next time in Part 4.



Abraham Maslow's hierarchical theory provides a useful model for summing up our needs. In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, all the basic needs are at the bottom, and the needs concerned with a person's highest potential are at the top. Each level of the hierarchy is dependent on the previous level. We do not feel the second need until the demands of the first have been satisfied. As we meet each need sequentially, the next need becomes the dominant motivator.¹

As we meet our needs at one level, we progress to the next level until we realize and feel confident that we've met all our needs. Then we experience fulfillment in our lives and are able to commit to a world outside ourselves.

Most Americans, however, are influenced by the outside world rather than influencing the outside world. It is here we fail to see that we can realize our personal needs within ourselves. We try to meet our needs outside, in things. At this point, we fall prey to the habits of consumption.

In the 1930s, Franklin Roosevelt proclaimed the "four essential human freedoms." They included the traditional three—freedom from fear, freedom of speech, freedom of religion—along with a fourth, freedom from want.

Now *want* is an interesting word. In the 1930s it most likely referred to being destitute or needy. This more poetic use of the word in political parlance of the time probably rang well with a wanting public. In a wonderful book, *Freedom from Want – American Liberalism and the Idea of the Consumer*, author Kathleen G. Donohue gets into the politico-socio-economic situation of the time in far greater detail than I can in this brief article. Suffice it to say, to achieve "freedom from want" public policy turned away from supporting production in factories to supporting consumers and consumption. This helped feed the economic recovery that followed the Depression and World War II.

While *want* had been perceived as being destitute and down on one's luck, it became understood by its not so poetic meaning: as strongly desiring or wishing for something. Rather than "being without basic needs," *want* became "the failure to have."

In another good book, *Keeping Up with the Joneses – Envy in American Consumer Society, 1890 to 1930*, Susan J. Matt writes that by the end of the 19th century, contrary to the moral virtues of self-discipline, delayed gratification, and contentment promoted by moralists of the previous centuries, political economists concluded that "it is beneficial to spread discontent" with what one has and to desire the opulent possessions of the wealthy. The belief

¹ See Maslow, A. H. *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*. New York: Viking Press, 1971.

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